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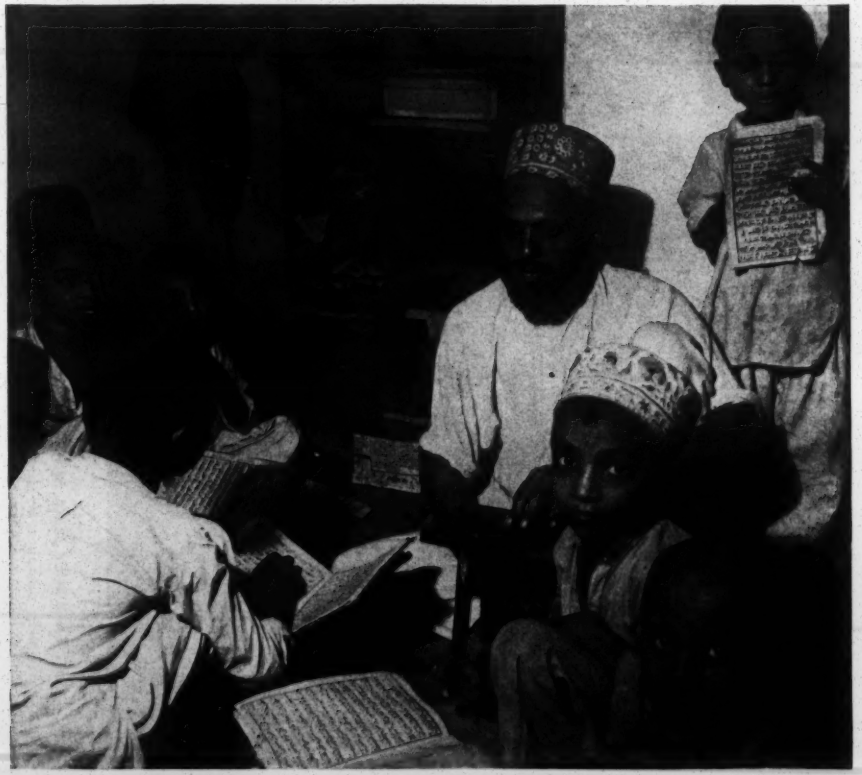
1. Mt. Sinai Monastery Reveals Ancient Records
2. Patagonia Gets Attention from Buenos Aires
3. South Seas Are Paradise—with Reservations
4. Changing Names Mark Many River Courses
5. 1949 World Changes Leave Many Loose Ends



VOLKMAR WENTZEL

MOSLEM SCHOOLBOYS IN DELHI, INDIA'S CAPITAL, LEARN TO READ FROM THE HOLY KORAN

They recite after their teacher until they have a passage by heart. The new Dominion of India (Bulletin No. 5) has launched a program providing free and compulsory education for its children. There are many Moslem and other minority religious groups in the predominantly Hindu country.

UMI

Bulletin No. 1, January 23, 1950

Mt. Sinai Monastery Reveals Ancient Records

BEHIND the massive gray walls of lonely St. Catherine's Monastery, at the foot of Mount Sinai, one of the world's richest original sources of Biblical and medieval-Arab history is about to give up its secrets.

A scientific expedition sent out by the American Foundation for the Study of Man, in collaboration with the Library of Congress, is beginning the huge task of microfilming the monastery's more than half a million pages of priceless manuscripts.

Treasure Trove of Information

This work, made possible by permission of Greek Orthodox Church authorities, and being carried on with the cooperation of the Egyptian government which controls the Sinai territory, is expected to yield unique material for scholarly research.

It has long been realized that a treasure trove of information was to be found at St. Catherine's. But the current expedition has the first opportunity for complete cataloguing and study.

An important factor in the monastery's age-long isolation has been its bleak and forbidding location, about 200 air-line miles southeast of Cairo, deep in the desert wilderness of the Sinai Peninsula.

Occasional visitors, coming from distant corners of the earth to see its famous buildings and library, have found a small group of Greek Orthodox monks leading a frugal, pious life, apparently little changed from that of more than 1,400 years earlier.

Each morning at four-thirty the monks assemble in their Byzantine-style church, where they worship—chanting in Greek—without break for hours. Afterward, neighboring Bedouins are fed. Those who wish food receive a daily supply of hard bread lowered by windlass from the monastery's battlements. The ration is three loaves for a man, two for his wife, and one for each child.

Oldest Christian Monastery

During nondevotional hours the monks are busy as gardeners, millers, shoemakers, carpenters, or electricians, for their home is virtually a self-contained little world. Monastery servants are the Jebeliyeh, "Men of the Mountains," who claim to be direct descendants of the original Wallachian and Bosnian serfs sent by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I to protect the monastery.

St. Catherine's is believed to be the world's oldest Christian monastery. Legend says a church was built on its site as early as the fourth century, through the aid of Queen Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. Erected as a refuge for early Christians, it rose at the traditional site of the Burning Bush, from which the Bible says the angel of the Lord spoke to Moses.

But the little retreat soon became the target of periodic raids by wandering Bedouin tribes. In the sixth century bearded monks asked for

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UMI

MAYNARD OWEN WILLIAMS

ON ITS JOURNEY FROM JUNGLE TO COUNTRY CLUB, RATTAN PASSES THROUGH THE INDONESIAN PORT OF MAKASSAR

Bundles of rattan, resembling packages of giant spaghetti, are brought by native praus into Makassar, United States of Indonesia (Bulletin No. 5). From there it is shipped to Jakarta (Batavia), Singapore, Europe, and the United States to be made into the type of furniture popular for summer cottages, resort hotels, tropical homes, and country clubs. This tough-fibered, small-stalked palm grows in the Indonesian jungles. Resilience and light weight especially adapt it for light, cool furniture. Because the furniture is bulky, rattan is exported as raw material, to be twisted and bent into chairs and tables, screens and baskets, at points near where it is to be used.

Bulletin No. 2, January 23, 1950

Patagonia Gets Attention from Buenos Aires

PATAGONIA, the "Argentine Siberia" extending south from the *pampa*, is getting more and more attention from the home government. Though considered part of Argentina since the founding of the republic, Patagonia by nature and geography has been like a land apart from the bustling modernity of the Buenos Aires region.

Now Argentina is building a combined naval base and commercial harbor at Puerto Madryn, about halfway along the Atlantic coast between Buenos Aires and the Straits of Magellan (Estrecho de Magallanes). New coal mines have been opened near Lago Argentino in the far-south Andes foothills. And at Comodoro Rivadavia, 250 miles south of Puerto Madryn, lie Argentina's most dependable oil wells. Last, the government is offering to piece out 2,750,000 acres to individuals who promise to farm or ranch the land themselves.

Welsh "Saw It Through"

This activity is of recent development, but Patagonia's promise has long been known. Welsh and other Europeans immigrated into the bleak land long ago and after bitter years complained that the land of promise had not kept its promises. They had to brace their homes against land and sea gales. They planted crops in the thin soil only to see them carried off by flood. Warlike Indians were a menace.

But the hardy folk "saw it through." The section around Puerto Madryn and the mouth of the Chubut River is still called Little Wales. This area, including the towns of Trelew and Rawson, expects improvement in fortunes with the port construction at Puerto Madryn.

But Patagonia, about the size of Texas, includes one-fourth of all Argentina and modern developments are still merely tiny scratches on its vast face. It is largely a plateau land of high winds and little rain, supporting, on the whole, sparse natural vegetation and few people. Patagonia's very name is associated with distant, untraveled ends of the earth.

Translated, Patagonia means "Land of the Big Feet," a name given it by early explorers who were amazed at the size of footprints found there. As the home of a giant native race, however, Patagonia has been considerably overrated (illustration, next page).

Irrigation Brings Orchards and Fields

Sheep raising is the chief occupation of the region. Patagonia's output furnishes a large proportion of Argentina's exportable supply of wool, sent chiefly to Europe. Although in certain sections of the plains the constant wind-blown dust makes for dirty, dry, and rough fleece, Patagonia's vast flocks in general contribute to the world market some of South America's best quality product.

Irrigation, particularly in the northern sections, has transformed some of the once-desert area into blooming orchards and fields. In recent years, families have settled all along the banks of the Rio Negro.

In the scenic southwest of lakes and mountains, toward the Chile

UMI

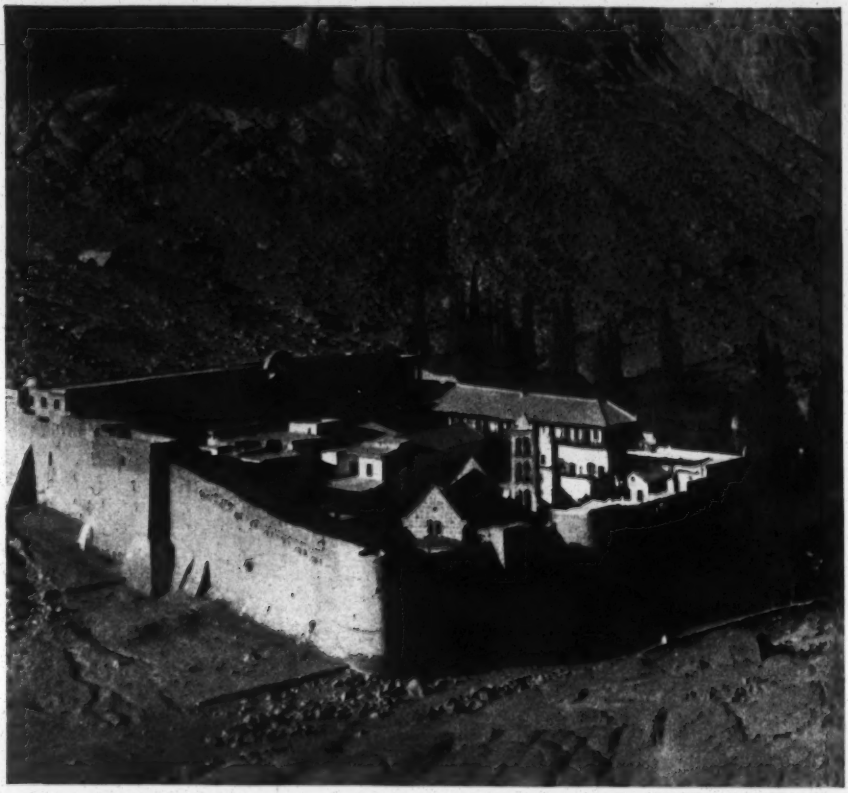
protection from Justinian, whose fame as a church builder had spread to their remote outpost. Justinian ordered the building, about 550, of a huge fortified stronghold around the existing church.

Later the monastery was named St. Catherine—the result, according to legend, of the finding of the saint's relics on Mount Sinai. The monastery has survived to this day, in spite of the armies that have surged across the peninsula. Moslems have given it their protection since the days of Mohammed, when the prophet was said to have rewarded the monks' hospitality by special grants and privileges.

Because of the dry climate of the region, it is expected that the manuscripts now available for photographing will be in good condition. They were written in Greek, Arabic, Syriac, Slavonic, Persian, Georgian, and Ethiopic.

NOTE: Mount Sinai may be located on the National Geographic Society's map of Bible Lands and the Cradle of Western Civilization. Write the Society's headquarters, Washington 6, D. C., for a price list of maps.

For additional information, see "Sinai Sheds New Light on the Bible," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for December, 1948; "East of Suez to the Mount of the Decalogue," December, 1927; and "Flying Over Egypt, Sinai, and Palestine," September, 1926.



WILLIAM B. AND GLADYS TERRY

AT THE FOOT OF MT. SINAI, WHERE MOSES RECEIVED THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, STANDS ST. CATHERINE'S MONASTERY, AN OASIS OF CHRISTIANITY

Bulletin No. 3, January 23, 1950

South Seas Are Paradise--with Reservations

BLIZZARDS sweeping down from the frozen north, icy roads and frosted windowpanes, sidewalks to shovel and furnaces to stoke prompt dreams of a tropical paradise. The British Colonial Office reports that it operates a real one—the dime-size Gilbert and Ellice Islands of the fabulous South Seas.

Among other attractions, the islands have no housing shortage, no poverty, and no high taxes.

Praised by Stevenson

But whether or not a would-be immigrant can expect to find a genuine Utopia there all depends on what he seeks. If, for instance, he wants to be alone, there are probably few places in the world more isolated. News from the outside is meager, supply ships make infrequent calls, and planes are rarely seen.

If he is looking for a superb climate, this is it. The thermometer seldom dips below 72 degrees Fahrenheit or rises above 92 in the shade. Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited the islands in 1889, wrote of daylight hours spent in a gleaming sun and a bracing wind, and nights of a "heavenly brightness."

Finally, some sportsmen claim that there is no finer fishing ground anywhere than in the Gilbert group. In surrounding waters swims an abundance of "big ones," including sharks, spearfish, and barracuda.

However, life on the sandy coral islands has its difficulties and minor hardships. Except for the coconut palms that lend glamour to the gleaming beaches, and the starchy taro plant, few fruits and vegetables will grow there. The handful of European residents must depend on canned foodstuffs for variety in their meals.

Stevenson jokingly described the bill of fare as being entirely one of coconuts. According to him, these were served up either green or ripe, raw or cooked, hot or cold. Indeed, the coconut, along with fish, still forms the backbone of native diet. An occasional pig is a rare treat (illustration, next page).

Many Isles but Few Islanders

The native population numbers about 36,000. It is composed of two distinct racial groups speaking entirely different languages. The Gilberts are inhabited by copper-colored Micronesians, generally a reserved people, while the Ellices are populated by light-skinned Polynesians, a vivacious and demonstrative race.

But there is more to this British South Seas possession than the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Administratively, it also includes Ocean Island, an arid, isolated speck 250 miles west of the Gilberts. The sparsely inhabited Phoenix Islands, northeast of the Ellice group, and three detached atolls—Washington, Fanning, and Christmas—all south of Hawaii, are also part of the colony. Some of these outlying islands have been claimed by the United States.

UMI

boundary, a tourist trade is being developed, aided by a government program for new rail communications, hotels, and improved facilities for fishing, skiing, and other sports.

Three territories—Rio Negro, Chubut, and Santa Cruz—are generally considered to comprise the Argentine portion of Patagonia. Their combined population was about 212,000 in 1947. The 1914 census gave the three territories only 75,000. Many of the new settlers came from Italy. Patagonia's wide open spaces are gradually disappearing, as sheep ranchers fence in their big estates.

Strictly speaking, the term Patagonia applies to all south Chile as well as Argentina. Common usage restricts it to the tableland east of the Andes. Chile and Argentina disputed Patagonia until 1881 when virtually the present boundary was drawn, to be clarified finally in 1907.

NOTE: Patagonia is shown on an inset on the Society's map of South America.

For additional information, see "Life on the Argentine Pampa," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for October, 1933.

See also, in the GEOGRAPHIC SCHOOL BULLETINS, November 22, 1949, "Tierra del Fuego Goal of Modern Pilgrims."

THE BIG FEET OF HER ANCESTORS MAY HAVE GIVEN PATAGONIA ITS NAME

When Magellan discovered the region in 1520, footprints of great size were reported. The Spanish word for big feet is "patagones," hence Patagonia. This Tehuelche matron, off to the nearest trading post, belongs to a tribe that averages slightly more than six feet in height.

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Bulletin No. 4, January 23, 1950

Changing Names Mark Many River Courses

RIVERS, as well as human beings, have aliases, New York reminds the world, in planning to tap the Hudson and create "North River punch" to help meet any future water emergencies.

North River persists as the New Yorkers' name for that stretch of the Hudson which rims the western side of Manhattan Island (illustration, next page). It dates from colonial times when it distinguished the estuary of the Hudson from that of the Delaware, then known as the South River.

Saskatchewan Drops Indian Name in Lake

It takes three names to label the main stream of North America's second-greatest river system. Melting snows from the Columbia Ice Field feed the Athabaska River, which flows 750 miles northward through Canada to Athabaska Lake. From there it becomes the Slave River for 220 miles to Great Slave Lake, and then the Mackenzie for its long, cold, final run to the Arctic Ocean.

Waters tilted eastward from this same ice field on the Continental Divide feed the Saskatchewan River. Halfway along its 1,700-mile eastward course to Hudson Bay, the stream drops its Indian name in big Lake Winnipeg. From there it continues as the Nelson River.

A short distance south of the Columbia Ice Field, the Missouri begins its long meander to the Gulf of Mexico. Because early explorers of America traveled from east to west and reached the eastern branch first, naming it the Mississippi, this section rising in northern Minnesota is generally considered the main stream. But the Missouri is much the longer portion of the continent's No. 1 river system. Consequently, two names—Mississippi-Missouri—must be bracketed in referring to the system now.

The same thing happened to Australia's principal river system, the Murray-Darling. Early settlers named the Murray, which flows from near Melbourne to the sea near Adelaide. The name Darling was later given to the system's far longer branch. It also happened in Russia, where Cossacks explored the Yenisei from the west. Later discoverers observed the greater length and volume of its Angara-Selenga tributary.

Ocmulgee Becomes Altamaha

In the southeastern United States, tricks are played with river names. In North Carolina, the Yadkin drains the central part of the state, only to become the Pee Dee shortly before entering South Carolina. The Pee Dee is said to have been the river of Stephen Foster's song until the composer decided the name "Swanee" sounded better set to music.

The picturesque New River, also rising in North Carolina, flows northward to central West Virginia. There it is joined by the tiny Gauley and becomes the Kanawha for its final 100 miles past Charleston to join the Ohio. Georgia's Ocmulgee River becomes the Altamaha for the last 100 miles of its course to the Atlantic.

In many parts of the world two rivers join to take a third name. The Amazon, the world's largest river in volume, is the union of the Solimoes and the Negro. Farther south in South America, the La Plata,

UMI

In all, the group comprises 37 coral atolls and small islands scattered over more than 2,000,000 square miles of ocean. Since the end of World War II, the headquarters of the islands' government has been located on Tarawa, the island in the Gilberts which the United States Marines wrested from the Japanese in November, 1943.

On Ocean Island are rich phosphate deposits. This useful mineral is practically the only source of wealth in the islands. Small shipments of the copra produced on other islands complete the export list.

NOTE: The Gilbert and Ellice Islands are shown on the Society's map of the Pacific Ocean, on which they appear in a large-scale inset.

For additional information, see "American Pathfinders in the Pacific," in the *National Geographic Magazine* for May, 1946*; "Gilbert Islands in the Wake of Battle," February, 1945*; "War Finds Its Way to the Gilbert Islands," January, 1943*; and "Hidden Key to the Pacific," June, 1942*. *(Issues marked with an asterisk are included in a special list of Magazines available to teachers in packets of ten for $1.00.)*

UNIVERSAL DELICACY AMONG SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS IS ROAST PIG

TEACHERS! Do you leaf aimlessly through your *National Geographic Magazines*, looking for that article on Greece, those color pictures of Guatemalan costumes? Save time. Order the new Cumulative Index, 1899-1947 inclusive. Price $2.50 anywhere. 1947-48 Supplement, 25¢ in U.S. and Poss.; elsewhere 50¢.

Bulletin No. 5, January 23, 1950

1949 World Changes Leave Many Loose Ends

IN THE world's ever-continuing story of shifting boundaries and changing governments, 1949 was largely a year of indecision.

A few definite transfers of authority were provided for, as in the Netherlands Indies and former Italian colonies in Africa. But map makers and historians found many dangling ends at the year's close, from the remote Pacific to the heart of Europe.

Indonesia Becomes Netherlands Partner

The greatest change was initiated at The Hague when Netherlands and Indonesian representatives agreed on the establishment of the independent Republic of the United States of Indonesia. The republic is made up of federated states, stretching along 3,000 miles of the southwest Pacific. The Netherlands' share of New Guinea remains under Dutch jurisdiction.

Formal transfer of sovereignty, on December 27, made the Indonesian republic equal partner with the Netherlands under the Dutch Crown.

The United Nations General Assembly voted independence for Italy's prewar North African possession, Libia, to become effective at the latest by 1952. Libia's regional divisions, Tripolitania, Cirenaica, and Fezzan, which had been under British and French authority since World War II, are to be unified as a sovereign state, with the aid of a U.N. commissioner and a ten-country council.

The United Nations also voted eventual independence for Italian Somaliland in east Africa. However, arrangements were made for an Italian-U.N. trusteeship, to act until the new status is fully attained. Decision on Italy's colony of Eritrea, now under British occupation, was postponed for further consideration. Ethiopia claims part of it.

In the closing hours of the U.N. Assembly in December, international control was voted for Jerusalem, although the old and new sections of the city were under occupation by the respective forces of Jordan and Israel, both opposed to the U.N. action. Transfer of the government of Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem was reported continuing.

Communists Announce New Government at Peiping

Japanese, German, and Austrian peace treaties remained on the list of 1949's unfinished business. Meanwhile, two rival local governments were established in Germany. The Western German Federal Republic was inaugurated in the area under civilian occupation by the United States, France, and Great Britain. In Soviet-controlled east Germany, the German Democratic Republic was formed.

Across the world, in war-battered China, communist forces at Peiping announced formation of the People's Republic of China. Among great powers already recognizing the new regime are the Soviet Union and Britain.

India (illustration, cover) and Pakistan, now independent neighbors, continued in 1949 consolidation of their unions. Of the former prince-

though no more than an estuary of the combining Paraná and Uruguay rivers, is No. 2 in volume of flow.

The Tigris and Euphrates rise in eastern Turkey, form the boundary of Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), Biblical "land between the rivers," and finally meet in the marshy Shatt al Arab before entering the Persian Gulf. In east Asia, the Amur is formed by the Kerulen and the Shilka.

The sacred Ganges, according to Hindu legend, divided into 100 channels to reach and cleanse 60,000 damned souls. Into this same humid Bengal delta flows the Brahmaputra, known also as the Matsang, Tamchok, Tsangpo, and Dihang in sections of its course across Tibet and Assam.

In its wild upper reaches, China's Yangtze is given a different name by almost every tribe living along its banks. Chambezi, Luapula, Luwa, and Lualaba are among the better known names of the upper main stream of Africa's Congo River. The Nile, longest river in the world, is successively the Kagera, Victoria Nile, Albert Nile, and White Nile before being joined by the Blue Nile at Khartoum.

Among well-known aliases, of course, are such titles as Father of Waters and Old Man River for the Mississippi, Big Muddy for the Missouri, and River of No Return for the Salmon. Brazil's River of January (Rio de Janeiro) is no river at all, but a city.

PORT OF NEW YORK AUTHORITY

NEW YORK'S SKYSCRAPERS LOOK DOWN ON AN UNUSUAL LULL IN HUDSON (NORTH) RIVER TRAFFIC

Running parallel to the East River (which actually does form Manhattan's eastern boundary), the "North" River is geographically confusing because it flows along the island's western side. Behind the docked ships the tall buildings of midtown pattern the city's famous skyline. In the foreground cargo crowds the New Jersey docks.

ruled states, only disputed Kashmir was left unassigned. A U.N. Security Council committee reported failure to bring about necessary conditions for a plebiscite to decide on Kashmir's future.

The fate of several tiny enclaves in India, held by France and Portugal, remained undecided. By the close of 1949, only French Chandernagor had, through overwhelming vote, indicated its wish to join India.

On the more definite side of 1949 events, Newfoundland (illustration, below), which had been under British Crown supervision since the 1930 depression, became a province of the Dominion of Canada. Britain's Mediterranean bases, Malta and Gibraltar, received new rights.

In Surinam (Dutch Guiana), the Netherlands possession in South America, an autonomous government was initiated as citizens held their first general election. Perhaps the most arresting headline made by voters was the overthrow of the long-popular labor governments in New Zealand and Australia. The results served to intensify interest in the outcome of Britain's general election, a well publicized top item on 1950's schedule.

Among the year's special notes for map makers were a number of name changes. Gaelic Eire is now officially the Republic of Ireland; Trans-Jordan has become the Hashimite Kingdom of the Jordan, Siam wishes to be known again as Thailand, "Land of the Free." The Iran government has indicated that it may be called either by the ancient name of Persia, or its modern title, Iran.

ROBERT F. SISSON

BOTH TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING IN ST. JOHN'S CONTRAST OLD AND NEW

Wild game comes to the housewife by motor truck but horsecarts still are seen. Stone and brick structures are replacing frame buildings of Victorian design in this Newfoundland city, the easternmost in North America.